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THE LAKEWOOD PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

'AN OVERVIEW'

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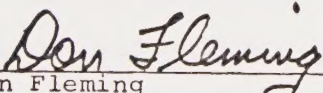
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INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared to assist the City Council, City Manager and, in general, all City employees in understanding the functions, responsibilities and activities of the Public Information Office. The City of Lakewood organizational relationships guide identifies nine special public information functions with the Administrative Services Department. Included among these functions is the determination of the need for, and preparation and distribution of, information brochures; the preparation and distribution of the City's Newsletter and Annual Report; the responsibility for arranging press conferences and other media contacts; the establishment of a system for handling citizen complaints and inquiries; the establishment of working relationships with media representatives; and the utilization of the Public Information Officer as the focal point for city officials desirous of disseminating information. These basic functions, identified in September, 1972, provided the initial impetus for the Public Information Office. Twenty-one months later the Public Information Office has proven its ability to perform these basic organizational functions and, in addition, has broadened the scope of these basic functions. The expansion of the original functional concepts has been necessary to improve and professionalize the public relations thrust of the office. The purpose of this report is to report on the present status of the office relative to the functional concepts identified above while describing the creative and innovative aspects of the office.



Don Fleming
Public Information Officer

Generally speaking, the Public Information Office is responsible for the handling of all citizen service requests (complaints) and all public relations activity generated by City Hall. This activity includes, but is not limited to, the preparation of various brochures, press releases, and other printed matter, verbal communication with media representatives, the arrangements for numerous promotional activities, and any additional or necessary public relations work desired by the City Council or City Manager. Due to the numerous and diverse projects this office becomes involved in, it was felt that the identification of work "categories" would assist us in delineating the PIO's responsibilities. Seven such categories have been identified for FY 1974-75. An examination of the categories reveals the depth to which this office has penetrated the functional concepts mentioned in the introduction.

Each one of the categories represents an area of considerable PIO involvement. One category has been labeled "special projects." This category includes all projects and activities not specifically covered by the "regular" categories. The regular categories are community groups, citizen service requests, communications, publications, promotion-general and promotion-specific.

The category labeled community groups includes all activities of such city sponsored organizations as the Chamber of Commerce, Pan American Association, Rose Float Association and Chamber Orchestra. In addition, all other community group activity supported by the PIO - city sponsored or not - falls into this category. (ex: Jaycees and the Pomona Fair).

In the past year, this office has provided considerable staff support and guidance to the major community groups funded by the City. If the number of requests for community group funding is any indication, the demands upon the PIO for support of these groups will certainly increase in the 1974-75 fiscal year.

The next major category deals with citizen requests for service. This category includes all PIO activity relative to citizen service requests. Included within this category would be monthly and quarterly service request summary preparation, the development of a comprehensive filing system and new forms, the preparation of a book of information for use in dealing with citizen requests, any communications with department heads, county agencies or private firms concerning service requests, the evaluation of possible computerized record keeping, etc. Because a major responsibility of the office is handling citizen requests for service a fairly complete examination of our responsibilities, procedures and system is essential.

The Public Information Office serves as City Hall's primary recipient of citizen complaints (hereafter referred to as service requests). In order to perform this function properly records must be maintained and procedure established for handling these requests. The present filing system was implemented October 1, 1973, after several experimental systems were tried briefly. The policy and procedure for handling citizen requests has evolved over the past year. The evolution of this policy and procedure has centered on the increased accumulation of city information by the PIO. This information-gathering process is a continuous activity of the office. The present service request system is designed to provide documentation on each request taken by the PIO. The system also provides a monthly and quarterly summary report of requests.

Generally speaking, the procedure for handling citizen service requests follows a predetermined sequence of events. The sequence begins when a telephone call is received. A service request form is then filled out. This form includes the name of the caller, for filing purposes; his/her address; phone number; day of the week, a.m. or p.m.; in person or by telephone; the name of the individual taking the call; and the information about the problem. Once the form is completed the citizen is advised of the known policy/procedure for solving his/her particular request. The form is

then forwarded to the department involved or the appropriate agency (governmental or private firm) for action. A copy of the form is maintained in the PIO. The copy retained by the PIO allows the staff to respond to citizens when they make additional calls to City Hall. Eventually the original form, with the appropriate action taken, returns to the office where it is permanently filed.

The procedure described above is the basic method for handling citizen service requests. However, each service request has its own particular characteristics. Those characteristics that differentiate the many types of requests are the heart of the service request function. The ability to understand, interpret, and articulate these characteristics to the public is the responsibility of the PIO.

Rather than attempt to describe the procedure for each request we will examine only one particular request category - street repairs. This category includes general street maintenance, curbing, sidewalk and driveway apron repair, and some drainage problems.

The Los Angeles County Road Department is directly responsible for all street repairs within the City. Procedure has been established that allows the PIO to contact the County Road Department directly. This direct reporting method has eliminated some delay in reporting problem locations to the county. The original copy of the service request form is kept on file in the office while the yellow copy is sent to Public Works. The Public Works Department then flags the location of the problem. At the present time, after the County is notified of the possible damage, an inspector is sent to the location within a few days. The inspector surveys the damage and makes a report to the City's Public Works Director. The procedure for determining priorities for the completion of the repair is based on a comprehensive five year public works plan. There are eight other basic areas of citizen requests identified in a recent memorandum to the Director of Administrative Services. That correspondence described in a similar manner to what has been outlined above the other basic request areas. This office is continually

seeking information which will update our response to the citizenry.

Because the PIO must maintain a working relationship with the press and, other communications oriented organizations, a category on communications was developed. This category includes cable T.V. survey and evaluation, proposed audio-visual equipment for City Hall, all visual presentations prepared by the office (ex: History of Lakewood slide presentation), all media contact (ex: press releases), and the continued rapport with other cities, county, state government representatives and other written and verbal communications.

Another category of Public Information Office activity is the publication of an annual report, a quarterly newsletter, a monthly employees publication (Insight), various brochures, water bill inserts as well as the preparation of assorted proclamations. All printed information material prepared for distribution to the public directly is included in this publications category. An added bonus to the publications category has been the publication of an article in a national magazine ("Lakewoods PR Interns," Nation Cities Magazine, March, 1974).

The final two categories are community promotion-general and community promotion-specific. They are perhaps the most difficult to define. The distinction between general and specific community promotion is certainly arbitrary but useful. Under general community promotion such activities as the preparation of city plaques, awards, the high school internship program, membership in the Public Information Association and conducting tours of City Hall are included. These activities usually are of general promotional value-directly or indirectly involving individuals who otherwise would not have been involved in promoting the city. The specific community promotion category manifests itself by focusing on one activity with a direct promotional value to some entity, organization, group or individual other than the city. The Nye Library opening, Darrell Pyle POW activity, various luncheons and dinners attended by PIO staff and visits to City Hall by prominent individuals are examples of specific community promotion. Both categories require the utilization of PIO staff in varying degrees. The categorization of PIO activities is a valuable administrative tool. It allows us to classify our activities in a relatively logical and coherent manner.

A final category mentioned earlier in this report deals with "special projects." These are projects that do not fit into any of the other categories. These projects can be divided into five basic groups. The groups are: Executive Management (City Manager and Executive Assistant); Director Administrative Services (or Management Systems Analyst); Personnel Officer; Intergovernmental Resources Coordinator; and the Public Information Office. A complete list of these projects is included in this report. In addition, there is also a list of projects completed in the other categories. That list too is included in this report.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

1973-1974

CITIZEN SERVICE REQUESTS

1. Developed a new filing system and forms for service requests.
2. Developed a complete book of ordinances, policies, procedures relative to citizen service requests.
3. Answered by telephone and in person, numerous questions about citizens problems.
4. Answering service established for City Hall.
5. Continued to improve communications with city departments and county and private agencies providing city services.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Prepared a History of Lakewood slide presentation.
2. Cable T.V. survey.
3. Development of video-system for Council Chambers.
4. Personal contact made with area newspapers.
5. Established contact with electronic media.
6. Established bi-monthly radio show at KLON.
7. KLON COMMUNITY BROADCASTS.
8. Prepared a Public Works slide presentation.

PUBLICATIONS

1. Facts for voters brochure - layout and research complete.
2. Citizens handbook ready for printing.
3. Newsletter (quarterly)
4. Insight (monthly)
5. Numerous brochures ready for printing.
6. Prepare proclamations.
7. Water bill inserts - bi-monthly.
8. Develop magazine articles for national/state magazines.

LIST OF BROCHURES

- City Council community appreciation certificates
- Welcome to City Council meetings
- 20th Anniversary brochure
- Pan Am participation certificate
- City Hall tour brochure
- History slide show brochure
- Facts 'n Figures
- Water Department tour
- Memorial Day brochure
- Rose Float brochure
- New Bus Service brochure

COMMUNITY GROUPS

1. Chamber of Commerce activities
2. Rose Float Association activities
3. Jaycee Activities
4. Bicentennial Committee
5. Pan American Association
6. Lakewood Chamber Orchestra
7. All 87 Community groups re: City Hall Foyer displays
8. Compile and develop data for community group funding

GENERAL PROMOTION

1. PIO Association membership
2. High school intern program
3. Plaques
4. Awards
5. Pens
6. Keys to City
7. Coasters

SPECIFIC PROMOTION

1. POW-MIA Freedom Tree Dedication
2. Elton Tavernetti Luncheon
3. Nye Library Dedication
4. Darrel Pyle Luncheon
5. Iacoboni Library Dedication
6. Alan Cranston Reception
7. Coordinated Lakewood High Government Day
8. Prepared Exhibits for MIA Visit
9. Jo Bennitt's retirement Dinner
10. Coordinated Senator Cranston's deputy visit
11. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, HRD
12. Coordinated Auto Center preview showing
13. Coordinated Iacoboni dedication anniversary
14. Coordinated City Energy meetings
15. Coordinated All-American City award committee for 1975
16. Coordinated KNBC "Sunday Show" broadcast of Kommunity Kavalkade

SPECIAL PROJECTS

City Manager/Executive Assistant

1. County Club cost survey
2. Transient Occupancy Survey
3. DRB Survey
4. Auto Center telephone survey

Intergovernmental Resources Coordinator

1. Assisted in "701" grant application preparation
2. Assisted in Land and Water conservation grant application preparation
3. Assisted in Open Space Grant application preparation.

Personnel

1. Deferred Compensation survey
2. Educational reimbursement survey
3. Longevity compensation survey
4. Affirmative action, rough draft of policy
5. Fringe benefit survey
6. Employees protection manual
7. City commission compensation survey
8. Building and Planning staffing survey
9. Management comp. survey
10. Vacation/Sick leave survey
11. Finance Dept. survey

Public Information Office

1. PBX incoming call survey
2. Community promotion expenditure survey
3. Rough draft of telephone directory
4. Energy contest proposal
5. Revision of Lakewood Plan booklet
6. PIO budget report
7. Drop box report
8. V.T.R. grant
9. Community group funding forms
10. Municipal textbook
11. Mail handling report
12. Work study program
13. Service request system analysis
14. Newsprint recycling program
15. Represented city at county mtg. for odd/even gas plan.

Administrative Services - General

1. Revenue sources for mass transit funding
2. Unemployment compensation tax study
3. Disposal rate survey
4. Business license survey

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